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FE WEEK

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FE Week

FREE WITH THIS ISSUE



STAFF ENGLISH AND MATHS 'AN ISSUE'



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BACK TO MERGER DRAWING BOARD



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NIACE AND NOSEY



PAGES 10 & 11

LEPS DELIVERED £1BN EURO SKILLS CASH BLOW

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A European Commission-forced government climbdown on plans to hand control of nearly £1bn of Euro skills cash to the 39 local enterprise partnerships (Leps) has been labelled a "backward step" and "reverse-devolution".

The government had previously planned to give Leps a "direct role" in decision-making over European Social Fund (ESF) spending for skills training schemes up to 2020.

But the Minister for Communities and Local Government European Programmes, Lord Ahmad, has written to Leps telling them that only the London Enterprise Panel (London's Lep) would now be allowed to "manage and take decisions" over ESF and other European Union (EU) structural and investment funds.

His letter said the commission had "advised that this approach is non-compliant" with European Structural and Investment Fund Regulations, which state that only the managing authority — central government in England's case — could decide where the money goes.

The Greater London Authority Lep will be able to spend the cash as it has the necessary intermediate body devolved status.

It has left the remaining 38 Leps with merely "advisory" roles.

The climbdown failed to impress Alex Pratt, chair of the management board of the Lep Network and also chair of Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Lep that was allocated £5m capital skills funding up to 2021 last July.

"It is reverse devolution that's giving more power to London from the regions and not what was previously planned," he said.

Daniel Mouawad, chief executive of South East Midlands Lep that was allocated £9m capital skills funding up to 2021 in July, said: "At face value, it would seem that this goes against previous policy to encourage devolution beyond London."

A government spokesperson said: "Throughout the development of the EU Structural Funds programmes, the Government has sought a substantial amount of local involvement.

"We have always been clear that central government would retain Managing Authority functions, but as part of this the government has sought to give Leps and partners a direct role in decision-making on projects.

"However, the commission has expressed concerns about our proposed approach. To ensure that the programmes can start as soon as possible the government proposes to proceed with a model in which Leps and partners have a key advisory role while decisions will remain with managing authority teams based in local areas.

"The government will review the position in the next 12 months and use that time to work with Leps to develop proposals for greater local responsibility."



Lady Kennedy (front, second from right) with learners helped by her foundation

Lords celebration for foundation learners

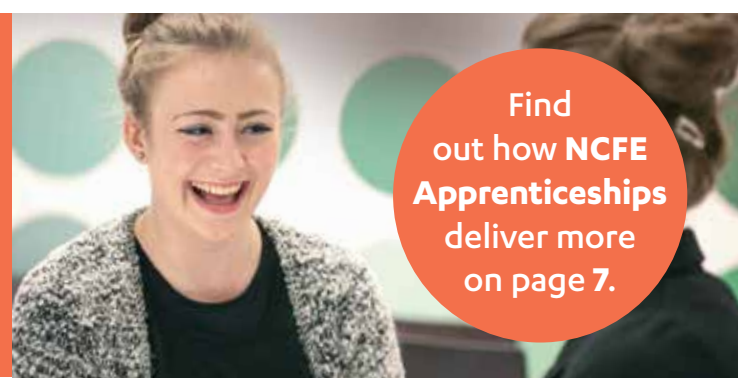
The success of nearly 90 learners helped by the Helena Kennedy Foundation to overcome a variety of obstacles was celebrated at the House of Lords.

Each Learner selected by the foundation — which is supported by *FE Week* — received a bursary of £1,500 to help cover the costs of going from FE college study to higher education, as well as on-going guidance and training from the foundation.

Lady Kennedy said: "It is an honour to support such inspirational and deserving people in their rise to success. Presenting these students with one of our awards in acknowledgment of their achievements at university marks a crucial milestone in their lives and future careers."

The event took place on Monday, March 2.

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EDITION 130

NEWS

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AOC CALLS FOR CLARITY ON NEW 'WILFUL NEGLECT' CRIME

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The Association of Colleges (AoC) has called for clarity over proposed new rules that could see college staff jailed for failing to report sexual abuse of learners.

Prime Minister David Cameron has announced a consultation on plans to extend the new criminal offence of 'wilful neglect' to cover those who work in education — but he stopped short of saying what age range of learners it would cover, or which institutions.

The announcement has already led the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) to warn the change could lead to a "flood of referrals," fearing the change could scare teachers into a culture of "over-reporting".

And Marc Whitworth, AoC acting director of employment policy and services, said: "We've always called for child protection rules in colleges to be the same as those in schools.

"Following the consultation on the government's new plans to tackle child sexual exploitation, it will need to be absolutely clear what the specific requirements would be for college staff and they must be given adequate support to feel confident about referring children they believe to be at risk."

Brian Lightman, the general secretary of the ASCL, said: "School and college leaders and their staff play a key role in child safeguarding and already work closely with social services and police where there are any concerns about a child's welfare.

"There are robust professional systems in place in schools and colleges to ensure that staff report suspicions and it is unnecessary and counter-productive to threaten them with jail sentences.

"The unintended consequence could be that teachers are scared into over-reporting and that this leads to a flood of referrals to social services departments which are already struggling with workloads. This will ultimately make it more difficult to identify and deal with cases needing urgent attention."

A spokesperson for the University and College Union (UCU) has called for the consultation on the change to be "full and open".

She said: "FE staff already take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. Any proposed changes to requirements should be subject to a full and open consultation with colleges and education staff."

Speaking at a Downing Street summit organised in the wake of a series of damning reports which identified "systematic institutional failings" in response to child sexual exploitation scandals in Rotherham and other areas, Mr Cameron said the proposals were about "making sure professionals… do the jobs they are paid to do".

He said: "Children were ignored, sometimes even blamed, and issues were swept under the carpet — often because of a warped and misguided sense of political correctness."

The dates of the consultation have not yet been announced.

See editor's comment on page 8

College-sponsored school shuts after just two years

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Leaders of a general FE college that sponsored a local school have seen it forced to close just two years after opening having failed to attract enough pupils.

Stockport Technical School, a 14 to 19 free school that opened in September 2013 and currently has 98 learners, offers vocational courses in engineering, construction and motor vehicle engineering through Stockport College, alongside traditional GCSEs.

It was heralded as the first technical school of its kind in the country when it launched and was described as "innovative" by principal Philippa Ollerhead (pictured below left) and "groundbreaking" by chair of governors Wayne Jones (pictured below right).

But no new students will join the school from September, and those currently attending will complete their courses and work placements until September 2016 when the school will shut its doors for good.

Ms Ollerhead blamed problems with the school's accommodation, which left it operating out of an office block in Stockport town centre, for the recruitment problems.

"We found it difficult to attract sufficient learners as we have been located in a temporary office building — this did not support our ability to market and recruit new learners," she said.

"The Education Funding Agency purchased the former Hillcrest Grammar School site on behalf of the school in August 2014, but unfortunately on analysis it became apparent that the building was not financially viable to run with the number of students the school was estimating at full capacity."

She added: "Advice I would give to any other principals or head teachers in a similar position would be to ensure that a permanent building was identified and secured before opening."

Despite the setback, Ms Ollerhead remained positive about what she had hoped to achieve.

"There is clearly a demand from employers for the 'young apprenticeship' model of education which the school provides," she said.





"Stockport Technical School has successfully engaged with large, leading engineering employers in Stockport to secure 20 apprenticeship places."

Although Stockport College is not a direct recruiter of 14 and 15-year-old learners, it is hoped the college will be able to continue offering similar vocational options through its links programmes with other schools.

A Stockport College spokesperson said: "Stockport College has been a sponsor of Stockport Technical School since its inception.

"We opened our doors to Stockport Technical School pupils and staff to provide access to workshops and facilities suitable for science, technology, engineering and maths.

"While it's not in our remit to take ownership of delivering provision directly, we will work with Stockport Technical School, as we do with other schools, to offer an appropriate 14 to16 programme."

The school is also supported by Stockport employers Man Diesel & Turbo Ltd, Jacobs Engineering, Thales Worldwide, Stepping Hill Hospital and Balluff Sensors, as well as the University of Manchester.

FE WEEK NEWS IN BRIEF

Galloway 'deplores' cuts

An early day motion in the House of Commons that "deplores" cuts to FE funding has been submitted by the Respect Party's high profile MP George Galloway.

Mr Galloway, who represents Bradford East, said in his motion that cuts, including a 24 per cent cut announced last month, would "impact severely on Bradford College and on other colleges throughout the country".

The EDM did not have the support of any other MPs at the time of going to press.

ILPs among 'best firms'

Two independent learning providers are celebrating being named on a prestigious list of the UK's best companies to work for.

Hit Training and ACT Training have both made it onto the Sunday Times 100 "best companies to work for" list for 2015.

For Shoreham-by-Sea-based Hit Training it is the second year running it has been included, rising in the list from 92nd place last year to 88th this year.

Cardiff-based ACT Training has fallen from 35th place to 64th in its third year on the list.

World class answer

"World class apprenticeships" are the answer to an age of stagnation, a report by International Skills Standards Organisation (INSSO) chief executive Tom Bewick has claimed.

In his report, based on research of apprenticeship systems across the world, Mr Bewick calls for the renewal of "the purpose of our higher education and work-based skills and training systems".

Visit feweek.co.uk/insso-report to read the report, sector reaction and a special 16-page report on an *FE Week* research trip with Mr Bewick to the United States and Canada.

NEWS

‘Odious’ rule to be automatically written out of frameworks

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The government has agreed to the automatic scrapping of a rule that forces apprentices to re-sit qualifications they already have after fears frameworks would have to be rewritten to accommodate the change.

The five-year rule will be removed from the specification of apprenticeship standards for England (Sase), and it now appears it will be stripped from frameworks too — without them having to be re-issued.

The rule, due to be removed next month, means learners with English or maths GCSEs achieved more than five years before enrolment have to re-sit them or take equivalent qualifications.

It was thought its scrapping would only affect new frameworks written after April 6, but an FAQ document published by the Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards and endorsed by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) in its latest newsletter claims frameworks “do not need to be amended”.

The news has been welcomed by Ross Midgley, director of early years training provider, who had launched legal action against the rule, but he called on the government to go further.

He said: “Apparently the government lawyers have invented some magic fairy dust which can be sprinkled over existing frameworks, without the need to re-issue them, which makes the words printed in the framework take on a completely different meaning for learners who enrol after April 5.

“But in any event this does now seem to be an almost complete vindication of our judicial review. All apprentices — not just those in early years — are now free of the odious five-year rule.”

Association of Employment and Learning Providers chief executive Stewart Segal said: “It’s essential that the SFA takes a consistent approach across all frameworks.

“There will be apprentices with an old GCSE who may need to improve their English and or maths and we’re discussing with the agency how to retain this funding.”

A BIS spokesperson said: “We are working with partners to implement the changes to the Sase from April 6.”

She added that designers of some apprenticeships, including the children and young people’s workforce (England) framework and the health and social care (England) framework would still be re-issuing them “in order to ensure that the apprentices meet both the Sase requirements and specific sector/occupation requirements”.



From left: Business services administrator for apprenticeships Harmony Wood and 21-year-old apprentice marketing administrator Alixandra Fisher

Apprenticehsip week keenness at Milton Keynes

Staff at Milton Keynes College were among thousands of sector workers up and down the country to have set up events for National Apprenticeship Week (NAW), which launches today (March 9)

They created a specialist apprenticeship zone at college that will give learners an opportunity to explore a variety of industries available at all levels during an open event tomorrow.

And in the run up to the week, NAW has been boosted by a pledgeometer.

A total of 221 firms placed pledges to take on apprentices at the time of going to press.

Throughout the week, ministers and senior government officials will be out and about taking part in events, visiting businesses, and talking to apprentices.

To learn more about NAW events be sure to read the *FE Week* supplement free with this edition.

BARNFIELD LOOKS FOR ‘NEW PARTNERS’ AFTER ACADEMIES SPLIT RUBBER-STAMPED

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Barnfield College is “looking to forge new relationships” with partners in the education sector after Whitehall rubber-stamped its split from a chain of academies and studio school.

Skills Minister Nick Boles officially approved the break-up of the Barnfield Federation, which means the Barnfield Academy Trust and Barnfield College, its original sponsor, are now separate entities.

The decision brings to an end more than seven months of uncertainty since the proposed split was announced last June, and a particularly troubled period for the college, which became the first FE provider to expect a second full visit from FE Commissioner Dr David Collins after Ofsted described it as “inadequate” in January.

It comes more than a year after the Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency both published critical findings of their investigations into the federation and after Dr Collins called for at least half the governors to be replaced and for “significant changes” to the federation’s leadership after his first visit last January, triggered by financial concerns.

Tim Eyton-Jones, the new principal of Barnfield College, said the college was looking for new partners, but did not say whether he meant other colleges, schools or other providers.

He said: “We are looking to forge new relationships with all partners in the education, learning and skill sector so that collectively we can meet the needs of local learners, communities and employers.

“We have implemented a series of strategies at the college focused on reclaiming the excellence in teaching, learning, outcomes and destinations Barnfield College was once renowned for.”

Barnfield Academies Trust, which is made up of Barnfield South school, Barnfield West school, Moorlands Free School, Barnfield Vale school and the Barnfield Studio School, has also spoken of its efforts to move on from the federation.

Trust chief executive Andrew Cooper said: “Today’s announcement is the news we’ve all been waiting for.

“There have been issues and challenges in recent times, but from today it’s a brand new start for us. This is fantastic news for teachers, parents and most importantly the children and students we teach in our two primary schools, two secondary schools and studio school.

“The ministerial permission to go it alone demonstrates a huge vote of confidence in the great work already being done in our five schools. We share that confidence — we are all incredibly excited about this fantastic opportunity.”

Mr Cooper said the trust would change its name in the future.



Numeracy and literacy not just learner issues

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The FE sector has to face up to low levels of literacy and numeracy among staff if it wants to improve learners' maths and English, an Ofsted official has warned.

Marina Gaze, Ofsted's deputy director for skills and FE made the comments at the BKSB Skills Conference focussing on English and maths.

Ms Gaze's comments found support from the other members of the panel gathered at Leicester City Football Club on Tuesday (March 3).

In August, it became a condition of funding for all learners who had not yet achieved A* to C GCSE English and maths by the age of 16 to continue to study these subjects as part of their 16 to 19 education.

Ms Gaze argued one of the best ways to teach good literacy and numeracy was to embed it into other subjects, as well as offering English and maths classes.

However, she said, this created problems when staff had their own issues with literacy.

"I often see absolutely brilliant vocational tutors who can do the most amazing things, have the most fantastic skills, but their use of English is weak," she said.

"So because if staff don't have skills themselves, they can't help learners improve their own skills.

"So I think we have to be honest as a sector about the staffing issues we face."

Ms Gaze added the solution to issues with literacy and numeracy for both staff and learners often came from leadership.

"At Ofsted, when we see maths and English working well there is always somebody senior with responsibility for it," she said. "It has to be led from the top."

However, many panel members and delegates pointed to issues with recruiting and retaining staff to teach English and maths.

Dame Asha Khemka, principal of West Nottinghamshire College, said: "Recruiting the right people to teach English and maths and upskill is still an effort, but we need to do more of that."

She added that the college had recruited more English and maths graduates recently as a result of the 'golden hello' bursaries offered by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF).

But, she said: "Retention is an issue. Do you know what? There's no correlation between how much you pay people and how you retain people. It's about motivating those people, and nurturing them and recognising them.

"It is a problem, you have to work at it, you need to skill and reskill people constantly so people are being supported to do a better job."

Association of Employment and Learning Providers chief executive Stewart Segal said constantly changing government policy didn't help with staff retention.

"It's about making sure that what you're teaching is respected so that your teachers get respect," he said.

"Every minister says, we've got to improve — I know we have but what it suggests is that what we've been doing so far is not good enough.

"They've got to listen to what people are struggling with and build on what's good and we might have a chance of convincing people that what they're doing is recognised."

One audience member, who provided training in the Royal Air Force (RAF), explained all their apprentices were required to take Functional Skills as many had not come straight from school.

This meant, she said, many learners were forced to take level two Function Skills qualifications, despite operating at level three.

Naomi Nicholson, director of strategic relationships for vocational qualifications at Ofqual, said level three Functional Skills had thus far not been developed because "the idea was that level two was the functional level".

However, she pointed to the ETF review of English and maths qualifications currently underway. and due to report at the end of March, and said: "It would be interesting to see whether they might have any views on that or if other people say there's a need for it."

A Department for Business, Innovation and Skills spokesperson told *FE Week*: "We are not intending to introduce a new Functional Skills qualification at level three at this time.

"We have commissioned the ETF to carry out a review of English and maths qualifications outside of GCSE, and whether these suit employer and learner needs. We will consider any recommendations it makes."









Marina Gaze

Top left: Naomi Nicholson and Stewart Segal
Centre left: Asha Khemka
Bottom left: Delegates in the Ideas Exchange question and answer session



From left: Beej Kaczmarczyk, director, Learning Curve Group, Asha Khemka, Vic Goddard, principal, Passmores Academy, which featured in Channel 4 TV show Educating Essex, Naomi Nicholson and Stewart Segal



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Fraudster poses as principal ordering urgent payment

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A fraudster posing as a London college principal has been foiled in the latest in a string of attempted scams to hit the sector.

Finance staff at Westminster Kingsway College received an email, purporting to be from principal Andy Wilson (pictured), instructing them to make an urgent payment.

However, despite the email appearing to be genuine, staff noticed the reply email didn't match the principal's email address and checked with Mr Wilson himself.

A spokesperson for Westminster Kingsway College told *FE Week*: "The college can confirm that it received a fraudulent email asking for a payment which was flagged immediately.

"The college has rigorous procedures and checks in place, which prevented any scam from happening and the college was not put at risk.



"This issue has been reported to the Action Fraud helpline and we are cooperating with any further investigations."

The incident follows a series of similar attempted cons across the FE sector since the beginning of the year.

In January, at least eight colleges, including the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London and City of Southampton College were targeted by a conman, calling himself Brian Hall, who phoned claiming to be a bailiff on the way to the college to collect £7,000 which he said was owed to a fictional company.

He then attempted to con money out of the college, saying he could get a temporary suspension order — if the college hand over nearly £4,000.

FE Week understands no college handed over any money and the case is currently being investigated by Greater Manchester Police.

Con artists tried their luck again last month when the Colchester Institute received a letter purporting to be from ISG, the building contractors constructing the college's new £5.8m buildings.

The letter said the contractors had changed their bank account details — but when the college checked with the company, the letter was found to be bogus. Colchester institute financial controller Tanya Ellingham, who was part of the team that outwitted the fraudsters said they would have got away with "big money" if the con had not been noticed.

FE Week understands the Colchester Institute case has been handed over to Kent Police for investigation.

FE college UTC heads out of special measures

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A University Technical College (UTC) which had to be rescued by its local FE college after a damning Ofsted report could be on its way out of special measures, inspectors have said.

A monitoring visit report on Central Bedfordshire UTC came out on March 2, revealing it had made "reasonable progress" since an inspection in March last year resulted in an inadequate rating and special measures.

The revisit was the third since the full inspection, which found learning was "not secure" because teachers "do not always check students' understanding or how well they have developed skills in lessons".

Following the initial Ofsted report, published in June, then-Education Secretary Michael Gove asked nearby Bedford College to step in as sponsor for the 150-learner UTC.

The latest monitoring report said: "The quality of teaching is steadily improving. Teachers' subject knowledge has strengthened. Whereas previously not all teachers were teaching their specialist subject, this is no longer the case. Students have more confidence in their teachers."



It added: "Students typically display positive attitudes towards their learning because teachers have become more skilled at meeting their needs when planning for learning."

It also praised the support Bedford College had offered the UTC, saying it had been "successful" in strengthening the quality of teaching.

Central Bedfordshire UTC head teacher Lesley Glover (pictured) said: "Improvements are being made since Bedford College became involved with the UTC."

The news comes as the Baker Dearing Trust, which oversees UTCs, announced it would be establishing a new UTC in Newcastle.

Northern Futures UTC will specialise in IT and healthcare science and is so far is the only UTC due to open in September 2017.

There are 30 UTCs currently open, and 13 more are due to open in September, with a further 14 in September 2016.

Baker Dearing Trust Chair Lord Baker said he was "delighted" by the announcement.

He said: "Our challenge now is to ensure that young people and their parents have access to the information and advice they need to take advantage of this exciting and important technical provision."

For groups wanting to apply to open a UTC, there is expected to be an application round later this year, closing in October.



Back to the drawing board on merger as financial rescue plan rejected

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A Hampshire sixth form college has had to go back to the drawing board in its search for a partner with Sixth Form College Commissioner Peter Mucklow having warned it could not function alone financially.

Totton College principal Mike Gaston (pictured below, left) announced in December that his college would be seeking a partnership and Eastleigh College had emerged as a favourite.

But Eastleigh rejected the move this month following a governors' board meeting.

A Totton spokesperson told *FE Week*: "Eastleigh College has been in discussion with the Education Funding Agency [EFA] regarding merger with Totton College.

"They have now had the opportunity to model the impact of a closer relationship and following their recent corporation board meeting have decided not to proceed."

Mr Mucklow visited the 3,000-learner Totton College, which was deemed by Ofsted to require improvement a year ago and has an EFA allocation of £5.4m, in October after concerns were raised about a lack of improvement since it was issued with a financial notice to improve.

He warned the college, which also runs adult provision with a £2m Skills Funding (SFA) allocation and through subcontracting, faced an "immediate" crisis with the SFA seeking to claw back funding allocated for 24+ apprenticeships never delivered.

In response, Totton had been in talks over a potential merger with 14,000-learner and grade one Ofsted-rated Eastleigh College, also in Hampshire, which has a current SFA adult skills budget allocation of £16m.

The Totton spokesperson said, having missed out on the Eastleigh merger option, it was working the EFA "to agree a solution that is considered to be in the best interests of its students and our community".

"We have been advised by the EFA to continue recruiting for September 2015 intake. It's important to highlight that meeting students' needs will be at the heart of any decisions. We are still looking for a partner to realise the college's ambitions for future stability and growth," she said.

A spokesperson for Eastleigh College said: "In any merger situation we would want to deliver the same outstanding level of provision for learners at all the sites while achieving the necessary economies of scale.

"We were unable to see how this would be possible in this instance. Therefore we have now withdrawn from the Totton College process."

A DfE spokesperson said: "We are aware that Totton College's preferred partner has withdrawn. The EFA is now working with the college to agree a solution that is in the best interests of its students and the community.

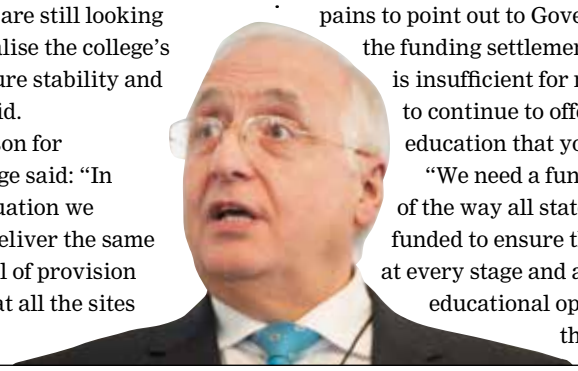
"Discussions are still ongoing and it would be inappropriate to comment further at this stage."

David Igoe (pictured below, right), chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges' Association, said: "It's sad to see another sixth form college get into financial difficulties and not table to find a suitable partner to aid its recovery."

He added: "This college's plight highlights the general problem which we have been at pains to point out to Government, that the funding settlement for 16 to 19 is insufficient for many colleges to continue to offer the kind of education that young people need.

"We need a fundamental review of the way all state education is funded to ensure that young people at every stage and age gets the educational opportunities they deserve."





Skills Minister admits 'no plans to promote new SFCs'

Skills Minister Nick Boles told the House of Commons the government has no intention of "promoting the establishment" of new sixth form colleges (SFCs).

Labour MP Kelvin Hopkins, chair of the all-party parliamentary group for SFCs and vice-chair of governors at Luton Sixth Form College, asked Mr Boles if he supported opening more SFCs during education questions on Monday (March 2).

Mr Boles replied that while the government had backed the creation of new sixth form schools, "we do not currently plan to promote the establishment of more sixth form colleges".

He said SFCs were "generally fantastic institutions producing great results, but I disagree… on this obsession with particular forms and structures".

James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges' Association, told *FE Week*: "It is this obsession [with structures] that has seen the inexorable rise of more expensive and less effective free school and academy sixth forms, while the number of sixth form colleges has continued to decline."

He added the government could afford to stop charging SFCs VAT, while schools and academies get a 20 per cent refund, if it stopped "lavishing money" on school sixth forms.



FE WEEK COMMENT

Taking a lead on care

At present, a number of colleges come into daily contact with children through school links.

And there is also a small, but growing number of 'direct recruiters' — and it's on this point that my mind is cast back to the AoC conference of 2012 when then-Shadow Education Minister Karen Buck displayed all the petty ignorance with which the sector sadly still has to contend.

She said she was worried that "very young people going into college may not get the full pastoral care and support they would want".

Of course Ofsted reports on college provision for 14 to 16-year-olds has shown just how wrong she was.

But more than this the sector has been at the forefront of other safeguarding issues.

Education Secretary Nicky Morgan told fellow MPs a few days ago about a new portal for reporting abuse — a concept many colleges will have been familiar with for some time on a local level.

The will to take such a lead has not come via the threat or force of criminal law — it has come through care for the learner and as such the sector's voice should be among those most keenly heard in the government's consultation on the wilful neglect law.

Chris Henwood
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TOP SKILLS CONFERENCE TWEETS

@becksybabes30: Excellent talk by Lesley Roberts of McDonald's, refreshing to hear such honesty. Thank you #skillsconf15

@deborahjudah: #skillsconf15 there is a correlation between teachers and organisations who use technology and improved outcomes

@bksbUK: Increase in funding for GCSE English and maths, as well as traineeships. - Beej Kaczmarczyk #SkillsConf15

@MoodleMcKean: Number of traineeships need to increase - study programmes need to be built around learner destinations (jobs) #skillsconf15 #ukfechat

@bobharrisonset: #skillsconf15 If you,or someone you know,benefitted from adult learning Oppose @NickBolesmp 24% cut in Adlut Skills



Warning FE finance probe 'may not go far enough'

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A National Audit Office (NAO) probe into FE and skills finances may not go far enough in looking at how the sector has been hit by "multiple funding cuts," National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (Niace) chief executive David Hughes has warned.

Mr Hughes, a former national director of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), told *FE Week* of his concerns about the purpose of NAO review in looking at the work of the SFA and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to monitor the financial health of FE providers and intervene.

The review, launched last month (February) and due to conclude this summer, has a "particular focus on colleges" and comes with FE and skills providers facing budget cuts of up to 24 per cent next academic year. Apprenticeship providers are expected to escape the worst of the cuts.

Mr Hughes said: "I think the issue of the multiple funding cuts colleges have faced and the increasingly narrow margin they are expected to operate in is putting the sector into a really difficult situation and I would hope that would be part of the context for this review.

"It is almost impossible to make every college in the country financially viable given all the funding changes that have been made, and the NAO may not want to ask about that, but it's certainly something the next government is going to have to answer.

"The NAO has to be apolitical, and given the decisions that have been made concerning the most recent cut, just looking at how the BIS and the SFA work to identify financial difficulty and intervene is a very narrow purpose.

"They have to do this review in the context of all of the cuts which have happened, including the one most recently announced, but I don't think it will deliver quite what some of us might like it to, which is a proper review of the financial future of the sector, particularly for colleges. That is a much bigger political debate, and one which the NAO is not going to start."

And while Stewart Segal, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, called for the financial situation of his members to be taken into account as well as colleges', the Association of Colleges, University and College Union and Association of School and College Leaders have already called for the 24 per cent cut to be considered by the review.

Meanwhile, Dr Lynne Sedgmore, executive director of the 157 Group, said: "It will be important that the NAO examines all aspects of the future sustainability of our skills system, including the responsibility of government in this area."

Dr Mary Bousted, Association of Teachers and Lecturers general secretary, said: "Following the government's announcement that it would cut FE funding for 2015-16 by up to 24 per cent, we hope the NAO evaluates the government's unnecessary focus on apprenticeships.

"We believe this focus on apprenticeships will limit colleges' usual operations, and reduce the options for learners because colleges will have to cut many other courses to be able to fund apprenticeships."

COMMENTS

Sector chief tells of jobs fear as providers face 24pc funding cut

There can be no great surprise in the sector. Cuts have been flagged for some time and it was obvious that apprenticeships are protected.

Providers must have planned for the inevitable and will have to reduce their overheads which means staffing cuts and reduced provision.

To be fair, there were many years of growth and in time budgets will grow again.
Graham

Yes cuts have been flagged for some time and yes we were aware that apprenticeships continued to be high priority and therefore would be afforded protection. Yes we had also planned financially for the maximum cuts that we had anticipated and were very close to the recent confirmation. However, that does not make the cuts acceptable.

Even in these tough times when we expect cuts, it is reasonable to also expect that other parts of the wider education sector will receive their fair share of the cuts. It is unacceptable that further education is receiving the brunt of these cuts and it is likely that the neediest in our communities and in society as a whole will be the main casualties. This is wholly unacceptable to me and requires to be challenged.
Karen

I have witnessed the rise of the apprenticeship. And I have witnessed its abuse by college and private training provider alike. The far from broad range of genuine apprenticeships actually on offer to teenagers (sorry, to most PC places 'young people) mean the majority of roles are continuation of bog standard college courses in the vocational sector. I am sure history will judge this sorry chapter as no better than the YTS adventure all those years ago.
Bob Harris

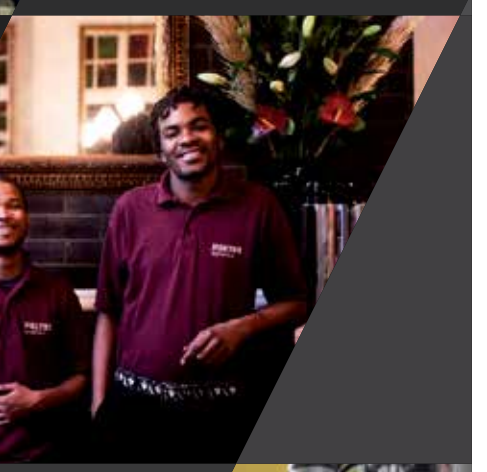
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PROFILE



IN PRAISE OF BEING NOSEY, AND METH

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"I guess research is just about being nosey. Nosey and methodical — that's what makes a good researcher," says Dr Fiona Aldridge, assistant director for development and research at the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (Niace).

"I love qualitative data because it's about people, but then I also love quantitative data because I love numbers. I'm a bit sad like that."

But, as we chat on the dark day the skills funding letter is published, I get the sense that, with an 11 per cent cut in next year's adult skills budget, there's one set of numbers she might not be so keen on.

The problem is, she says, the numbers are being viewed in the wrong way.

"It's a really hard time to argue for more money to be spent on anything given public finances, but investment in education is an investment — not a cost," she insists.

"It's investing in the skills of people to get jobs, progress in work, to develop the skills to support their home, their community and their society.

"We should be concerned therefore about the impact reducing that investment has on people's opportunities to take part in learning.

"Of course there are loans around for people who are convinced of the benefits of learning, but for those people who are not yet certain that its valuable to them then it could have a massive impact on numbers."

Aldridge, aged 39, began working for Niace 18 years ago, almost by accident after being sent there from a temping firm while she worked out what she "wanted to do with my life" – but quickly decided she might have already found it.

"I suppose I loved the idea that it was about people and people's opportunities to realise their ambitions," she says.

"You only have to go to Adult Learners' Week and see the stories of winners to recognise that this is something people recognise has made a real difference to their lives and made a real difference to mine, too.

"And therefore to work on a policy level or a practical level to help create more and better quality opportunities for adults to learn is just so enthusing and motivating."

But what really convinced her to stay was an episode in her mid-20s that ends with her being splashed across the front page of the Mail on Sunday.

"It was when a dispersal policy had been introduced and around 400 asylum seekers were sent to Leicester and all the media work was negative," she explains.

"And we were doing a tiny, tiny piece of work on asylum seekers — the skills and qualifications and experience they were bringing with them.

"And the local paper knew about it and was owned by the Mail — so the headline was 'NHS gives nurses' jobs to asylum seekers'.

"Well, we weren't working with the NHS, and asylum seekers can't work and we weren't trying to get them jobs, but apart from that it was right.

"I was really young and just horrified that there was a quote on there that had been taken out of context and Ann Widdecombe said I was increasing Britain's reputation as a soft touch nation. I thought I was going to get the sack."

Aldridge phoned then Niace chief executive Alan Tuckett.

"And he said: 'Excellent. I would much rather you get criticised for doing the right thing than applauded for doing the wrong thing'.

"The support, the encouragement and that sense of 'let's do the right thing here for learners, take risks but not dump it on you if things go wrong' made me think that was a place I'd quite like to work."

And Niace's emphasis on family learning, where parents learn alongside their children and in turn help them learn, chimed with her own experience of education growing up in Walsall with parents Geoff and Maureen, and younger brother Andrew.

"My parents are from a working class background, with not great educational achievement but a real strong sense of the value of education so they really invested in my education and supported it," says Aldridge.

"My dad left school at 13 and hadn't had a



HODICAL

It's a personal thing

What is your favourite book, and why?

I don't have a favourite book, but I love to read. I'll read a book and really enjoy it, but then just move on. At the moment I'm reading Dominion by CJ Samson, about the dangers of being overly focussed on nationalism — it's a story that's meant to be a million miles away from where we are, but it feels scarily close.

That's my current favourite book, but it won't be my favourite book in a month's time.

I like novels that give you an insight into different people, cultures and possibilities

What do you do to switch off from work?

I have three children so essentially I just walk through my front door and then I'm switched off, because children aren't very forgiving of the day you might have had at work. I like to read spend time with good friends and family

What's your pet hate?

I'm naturally optimistic, so I don't like cynicism. And if I'm doing something I like to put everything into it so I don't like half-heartedness

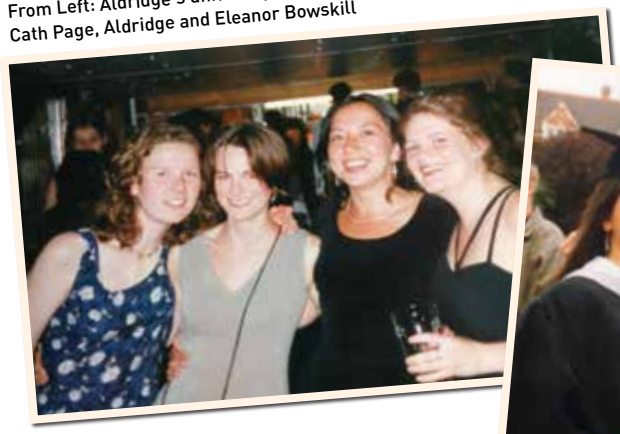
If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?

A good dinner party for me is fun, so I'd like comedians Rob Brydon, Lee Mack and David Mitchell because they'd keep me laughing all night

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I went through a stage of wanting to be Prime Minister until I saw Spitting Image and then I thought I wouldn't want anyone to ever do that to me. And then I wanted to be Kate Adie — she just seemed so strong and intelligent and thoughtful

From Left: Aldridge's university friends Clare Gough, Cath Page, Aldridge and Eleanor Bowskill



Aldridge with father Geoff graduating from Leicester University in 1996



Aldridge aged 5



Aldridge and husband Ian on their wedding day in 1999



Aldridge's three children, from left: James, aged 3, Elizabeth, 9, and Amy, 6



great education and went to be a bus driver and he hated it.

"He would say to me: 'You need to work hard at school, because you need to have choices about the job you do'."

One of her strongest memories, she says, is of him staying up late with her whenever she had to study.

"He was never in a position to be able to help me with my maths A-level, but he would just always be there so that I wouldn't be on my own for that."

After passing the 11-plus and attending grammar school, she became the first person in her family to go to university, studying economics at Leicester.

A gap year followed academia and then came the post at Niace, which she has seen grow from 40 people to 65. She has also extended its research work and, she says, expanded its focus from community learning into workplace learning.

Indeed, Aldridge manages the annual participation survey, measuring how many adults throughout the UK are accessing education.

"It's a really hard time to argue for more money to be spent on anything given public finances, but investment in education is an investment — not a cost"

"What always comes out in the survey is that, apart from the massive inequalities for learning, for those who are in those groups that are most unlikely to learn, the place where they are going to get those chances is going to be in work," she says.

"So actually that's a key area for us — if we're interested in adults having the opportunities we had just by going through the system in a particular way then we need to be focussing on work."

But a bigger change for Niace could be looming on the horizon, after the organisation announced a "strategic alliance" with the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (Inclusion) – which could, if successful, lead to a merger later in the year.

"I'm really excited about it," she says.

"I've worked with them for quite a long time and it works well, because they have the same approach to work, tackling inequalities and disadvantage.

"And lately we've been trying to think more about skills in the workforce and employment systems, and they've been doing more work around what we've been traditionally doing so we've been bumping into each other more.

"For me, an alliance makes complete sense and I'm quite excited about the potential that gives us for an extra offer — I'm really excited about the possibilities."

And, with an election coming up, the stakes are high.

Coming into the election, she says, "we really need to show the adult skills budget is an investment the country can't afford not to make".

"We need people to have the opportunities to take part in learning that will bring benefits to their working lives, their social lives, their families their communities and to the local economy and to be able to make that as easy as possible for employers and individuals and providers," explains Aldridge.

"It would be great to see some creative ideas on how to make that possible.

"It's a shame that money dominates everything, but it's about what we can do within that context to create good, high quality opportunities for people to take part in learning."

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EXPERTS

THE INDY SCENE



John Hyde is the chairman of HIT Training, a hospitality training provider that operates across England, and on the second Monday of every month he writes in *FE Week* about issues affecting independent learning providers

Labour's apprenticeship policy, so eloquently presented by Ed Milliband, totally exposes how out of touch his party is with the reality of the country's skills needs and how the Westminster bubble has removed him from his party's working class routes.

Under his plans, 18-year-old school leavers with three A-levels will go to university and those with two A-levels will go onto an apprenticeship.

But where does that leave the 50 per cent or more who will have no A-levels or the 40 per cent who will not have basic English and maths when they leave school?

Their policy assumes the entry point for apprenticeships is 18-plus post-A-level, when in reality it is 16-plus post-GCSE (or equivalent) and ignores the fact that for many young people leaving school for an intermediate apprenticeship at 16 is the best option.

It also overlooks the fact that even in the 21st Century many poorer families need to send their children out to work.

How have the Labour Party succumbed to this elitist A-level apprenticeship entry when the growth in the economy is being driven by level two entry jobs in hospitality, care, retail and construction.

Yes, we do need to expand the technician and digital advanced apprenticeship programmes, but not at the expense of craft skills.

For many work-focused people, an intermediate apprenticeship is the best entry route to an advanced or higher apprenticeship.

They are wrong in their assertion that the current apprenticeships are simply rebadging of employers' internal training.

Apprenticeships are strictly regulated and independently content-led. Apprenticeships can have elements added to meet employers' needs, but not taken away. Surely that's the best of all possible outcomes?

By focusing on advanced and higher apprenticeships Labour risk perpetuating an economy where staff at intermediate skills levels have to be imported from overseas, leaving many work-focused British citizens unemployed and without a springboard to higher skills.

Is this really the policy of the working class Labour Party or just their current academic, out-of-touch with reality, leadership?

Would a bacon sandwich be easier for politicians to swallow if cooked by an A-level advanced apprentice rather than a level two working chef?

The unintended consequences of an overall 11 per cent cut in Skills Funding Agency budget for 2015-16 will be to freeze traineeship numbers.

While stating the apprenticeship and traineeship budgets are to be ringfenced, the reality in the way funding works, will mean funding for traineeships will be restricted to the numbers currently on the programme.

Without being able to grow their programmes, many providers will cease delivering as decreasing starts will make the programme unviable.

> **While stating the apprenticeship and traineeship budgets are to be ringfenced, the reality in the way funding works, will mean funding for traineeships will be restricted to the numbers currently on the programme**

Eventually the whole programme will wither, which again will disadvantage young people who need the traineeship programme to kick-start them into employment.

This has endangered our traineeship programme with a national retail chain, which had committed to recruit all its new sales assistants through the traineeship route and produced at 75 per cent into-work success rate to date.

Let's hope the party policy makers listen to some of the noise being generated by us the apprenticeship practitioners at the three current conferences — AELP/City & Guilds, Apprenticeships4England and *FE Week* — being held.

Otherwise we face a bleak choice between the flawed and childish Richard reforms of the Conservatives and the intellectual proposals of the Labour Party to remove craft skills and non A-level achievers from the apprenticeship route.

We can only hope one or more of the minority parties, who may hold the balance of power, can bring some sense to the debate.

Whoever thought the likes of the SNP, Greens or UKIP could determine our apprenticeships future?

RUTH SPARKES



Managing director of marketing and education, media and PR agency EMPRA

Should the title of 'college' be earned and protected?

The title of 'college' appears to be coming back into sector fashion — and even worth fighting for, just ask Newcastle College principal Carole Kitching. Ruth Sparkes considers whether it, like 'university', should be protected.

After news that Newcastle College Group (NCG) successfully, and legally stopped a mystery outfit calling itself Newcastle College Ltd from trading under that name [*FE Week* edition 129], it's probably worth considering just what value there is in our institutions' brands.

Other than one business trying to pass itself off as another, which is a suspect practice to say the least, it's interesting to consider that some highly regarded and well-established colleges have changed their names — an important part of any brand.

> **Is there an argument for more control over the terms 'college', 'school' or 'academy', to help make sure that everyone understands what sort of learning institution it might be?**

Some colleges have dropped the word 'college' from their titles. Indeed, it was a bit of a trend a few years ago, but I think the word college is coming back 'en vogue.'

I suspect the college rebrand with the most press coverage was Lesoco (or LeSoCo as it had said). Born out of the Lewisham and Southwark colleges' merger, it has since become Lewisham Southwark College. West Notts College became Vision, now it's Vision West Nottinghamshire College.

Newcastle College (the real one) is part of this gang, sort of. As the institution grew, it took over or merged with other colleges and independent training providers, and became NCG. As I think many of these other colleges at one time or another have claimed, NCG is more than a college.

A cursory glance at its corporate website details its might. It is a collection of FE colleges, a sixth form, a training provider, a free school and more besides.

It boasts a turnover of more than £179m, has the largest Education Funding Agency contract in the UK, its own degree-awarding powers, delivers around 20,000 apprenticeships a year and employs thousands of staff. Arguably, the word 'college' is not enough.

Why, I wonder did the former 'Newcastle College Ltd' ever take it on? Perhaps it thought it could operate under the radar — that it could piggyback on NCG's mighty brand. Or maybe it thought NCG was so big, it'd never notice?

But there are plenty of organisations wanting to call themselves a 'college' — it is such an accessible word.

Schools call themselves colleges, 'Anytown Community College'. Some independent learning providers call themselves colleges, and some private colleges that might be legitimate or dodgy 'visa factories' have also used the term 'college.'

Is this practice a deception? Are these institutions deliberately using the term college to present themselves as something they are not?

Can similar be said for the term 'academy'? The Royal Academy of Music is a long way from being like the O2 Academies in Bristol, Brixton or Newcastle, and even further away from the Marlowe Academy, in Ramsgate.

And schools, they can be nurseries, primaries, secondaries or even higher education institutions. The AA's driving school offer, for example, would never be confused with the courses at the London School of Economics (LSE).

So, the only term that is very rarely 'misused' for the UK's education institutions is the word 'university'.

And that's because the use of the term 'university' in any institution's title requires the government's consent.

University is a title that has to be earned, to be applied for and is generally seen as an achievement when the title is eventually bestowed. For example Falmouth School of Art, became Falmouth University College and then Falmouth University. King Alfred's College became University College Winchester, then the University of Winchester.

So, is there an argument for more control over the terms 'college', 'school' or 'academy', to help make sure that everyone understands what sort of learning institution it might be? Would it be better if these titles had to be earned and bestowed like the word university? And what value does the word college really have when so many are prepared to ditch it, even if it is a trial separation?



ANDY GANNON
Director of policy, PR and research at the 157 Group

Funding system plays second fiddle to finances

The Skills Funding Agency clawback saga appears to have ended with around 100 of the 600 providers warned they might have to pay back funding actually having to do so. Andy Gannon considers what happened and also whether there's a bigger picture to look at.

The news last week that just 15 per cent of providers will be subject to a funding clawback from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) will, sadly, not surprise anyone who has worked in FE for any amount of time.

We have become rather used to our attention being drawn to data systems and funding 'errors', even though our natural instinct is to be more concerned with things like teaching and employer engagement.

It is striking that, while the overall number of those ultimately affected is small, nearly 700 providers received the first, rather ill-timed, communication from the SFA before Christmas. Even if only the chief executive of each one was caused a sleepless night or two, that still amounts to quite a lot of professional energy expended.

But the reality, of course, is that, in each of those 700 providers, there will have been a small team of people beavering anxiously away on data throughout the month of January in order to arrive at the conclusion, in many cases, that the clawback amount in total would be less than £500.

In lighter moments, you could be forgiven for thinking that we had just lived through an episode of Yes Minister. The story has it all – 'bumbling bureaucrats' pursuing palpably intricate processes which, to anyone in the outside world would seem, at best, unrelated to the business of education and, at worst, downright distracting.

There was even the delightful element of timing — cue scenes of hard-pressed provider data managers eating turkey and mince pies while hunched over a computer screen examining ILR fields while the Minister and Sir Humphrey enjoy a luxurious Christmas banquet without a care in the world.

But this is not Yes Minister. Rather, it is the state we find ourselves in because of one ultimate policy contradiction. That contradiction is best summed up as the rather perverse notion that increased freedom breeds increased control.

There is no small irony in the fact that, while the FE and skills system has operated in a more and more 'market-driven' way over the past two decades, the nature of centralised control has become more and more demanding.

At the highest level, this is explained away as the need for 'rigorous accountability' if professionals are to be allowed to spend public money as they see fit.

However, the real issues go deeper than this — and reveal a fundamental political mistrust of people 'on the ground' to manage the very things that they should be best placed to manage themselves.

Just as, with schools, central control extends over the curriculum and the money rather than the system as a whole and making sure that every child can access a good education, so in FE, we have an overly-bureaucratic approach to funding, rather than a consolidated national view on, say, employer engagement and careers advice.

It is very reassuring to hear SFA officials acknowledge the need to simplify and make more predictable their processes — and I have no doubt there is a genuine regret about the way in which this episode has been handled.

But simplification has a habit of making things more complex, and ignores the fact that the processes themselves are often a distraction.

"while the FE and skills system has operated in a more and more 'market-driven' way over the past two decades, the nature of centralised control has become more and more demanding

To add insult to injury, the clawback announcements, such as they were, came on the same day as the news that 24 per cent was to be cut from sector budgets in the coming year.

While huge effort has been focused on the microcosmic data detail, a cataclysmic shift will rock the big picture. What was Nero doing while Rome burned?



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Speeding to bobsleigh success



Bobsleighing champion George Johnston, from Richard Huish College

A Richard Huish College student has hurtled from fourth to second in the world youth rankings for Bobsleighing following two weeks of racing for Great Britain.

George Johnston, aged 16, is the number one youth driver in Britain and is looking in good form to qualify for the 2016 youth Olympics.

He beat competition by 0.56 seconds to win the last race of the Omega Series Races in St Moritz during half term and was announced overall winner.

George, who is studying a sport BTec extended diploma at the Somerset sixth form college, said: "I was really happy with the result because I was one of the fastest in training all week but I wasn't expecting that to be replicated in the race."





From left: Polly Edwards, owner of Otterdene Equestrian Centre with Bicton College student Maria Dowswell

Equine job joy for visually impaired learner Maria

A Bicton College student determined to secure an equestrian career despite slowly losing her sight, has taken her first step towards making her dream a reality by securing a role in industry.

Maria Dowswell was 13 when she was diagnosed with retinal dystrophy, a condition that slowly takes away vision.

Despite this, the 21-year-old is currently undertaking a British horse society (BHS) stage one training course at college and has now secured a role at Devon-based Otterdene equestrian centre as a working pupil.

Maria said: "Bicton College offered me the course that I wanted to study with horses and the support that I needed because of my visual impairment."

Alex Robinson-Barr, head of equine at Bicton College, said: "I can't express how proud I am of her to be working in industry while also continuing with her BHS course."

Learner has head in the clouds in toughest job challenge

The sky was no limit for ex-college learner Stephen Greenall as he scaled the heights of Canada's second tallest building to prove he could take on one of the toughest jobs in the world, writes Billy Camden.

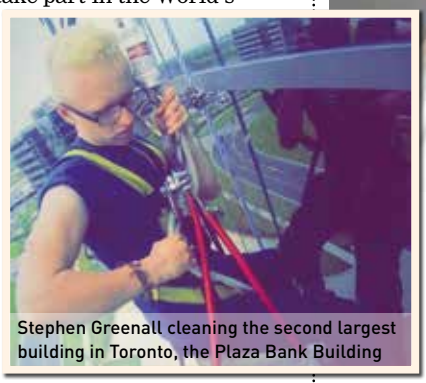
Looking down from the 180-metre high Plaza Bank Building skyscraper, Stephen Greenall's mind turned back to the comfort of his Warrington Collegiate circle of friends.

The 19-year-old's journey from a BTec national diploma in aviation operations to the top of Canada's second highest building, in Toronto, features on BBC3 tomorrow night.

He applied to take part in the World's Toughest Jobs programme and was accepted to take on the role of window cleaner.

"When the BBC told me I was going to Toronto as a skyscraper window cleaner. I was shocked, excited, nervous and speechless," said Stephen.

"At times I just wanted to be back with my friends at college. I went through a whole rollercoaster of emotions," he added.



Stephen Greenall cleaning the second largest building in Toronto, the Plaza Bank Building



Stephen Greenall at Warrington Collegiate on his aviation course

Filming took place over the course of two months from March last year, with Stephen completing his college studies upon his return to the UK.

Each of the six 60-minute episodes follows the journey of three 18 to 24-year-old Brits as they leave the UK in a bid to take on some of the world's toughest jobs.

Stephen met up with his episode's two co-stars — Dom Monk, aged 25, and Darci Tesfay, 23 — in Canada and after intensive training, lots of practice and health and safety checks the job began.

"When I was working up so high I felt like I could see the whole world. It was absolutely breath-taking," said Stephen.

"As you climb up the ladders you open this little door and all you see is blue sky. The sun feels amazingly close. It just leaves you speechless."



Stephen Greenall in Toronto filming Worlds Toughout Jobs

And his college aviation studies came to his rescue when he needed them the most.

"When I was climbing over the edge of the building I did cry a lot," said Stephen.

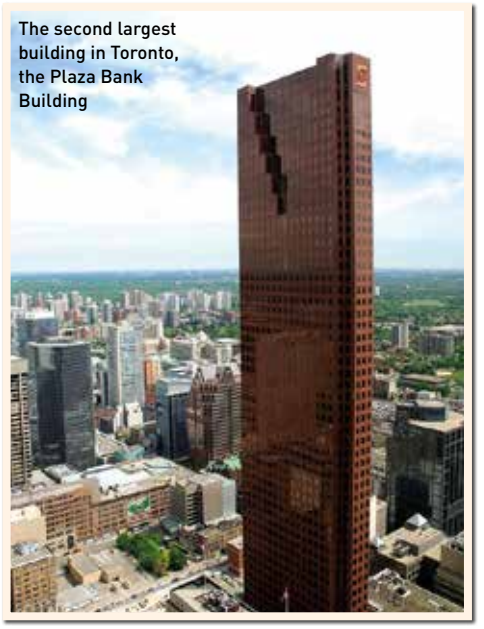
"However once the container started moving, I just went in to cabin crew mode telling myself not to worry, and imagined they were turbulence."

Diane Lewis, lecturer in aviation at Warrington Collegiate, said: "I'm really proud of Stephen and everything that he's achieved.

"He was a student who stood out from the start. Outgoing, determined, with a great personality I always knew he would be exceptional both in the classroom and beyond."

World's Toughest Jobs will be televised on Tuesday, March 10 at 9pm.

FEATURED CAMPUS ROUND-UP



The second largest building in Toronto, the Plaza Bank Building

DO YOU WANT TO BE IN CAMPUS ROUND-UP?

Send your stories with pictures to campus@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course details of students where applicable

& MOVERS SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new and who's leaving


Kevin Smith


Richard Heatly

Stoke on Trent College has welcomed Kevin Smith as its new principal.

Mr Smith, who has more than 25 years' experience in education, will support chief executive Sarah Robinson, allowing her to dedicate more time to the strategic future of the college, according to a college spokesperson.

In his most recent role as vice principal at Riverside College, in Cheshire, Mr Smith helped lead the college's 11-month turnaround from Ofsted 'inadequate' to 'good' by early 2010.

"I am passionate about transforming people's lives through the power of education; making teaching, learning and assessment our first priority and ensuring that the needs of our learners always come first," said Mr Smith.

"Among my main aims as principal are to help Stoke on Trent College become the first choice for school leavers, adults and employers across the sub-region and lead the college to become a centre for vocational excellence."

Mr Smith, whose appointment at the grade two-rated college came around three months after FE Commissioner Dr David Collins visited over financial concerns, brings with him expertise in curriculum and quality following his time with FE Associates, where he provided interim management and performance improvement solutions to more than 100 colleges and independent learning providers.

Ms Robinson, who had previously served as Stoke college principal, said: "Kevin is passionate about high standards within education and his attention to detail in quality improvement makes him a perfect fit for our college."

Meanwhile, Richard Heatly's 12 years at the helm of Hereford College of Arts (HCA) is due to end at the end of the academic year.

Before he moved into teaching at the 350-learner specialist college, rated as good by Ofsted in November 2013, he was a maker and ran a successful creative business, exhibiting his work in London, Milan and Paris.

A college spokesperson said: "When Richard joined the college in 2003, the future of HCA was uncertain. In August he will leave a financially secure College that has developed immensely, thanks to the major achievements of staff and students under Richard's leadership."

Mr Heatly said: "HCA is now the major university-level provider in the county, and its future will be as an arts university.

"It will complement the technology focus of the new university — which of course we also support.

"The college is the kind of place that hardly exists elsewhere, so we should all value it and be proud of it. Herefordshire is a really creative place, and this college is the foundation and centre of that creativity."

He added: "I plan to pursue my interest in the arts as a practitioner again and by being involved with organisations.

"I hope to keep in touch with the College as of course I will remain a great supporter of HCA."

To let us know of any new faces at the top of your college, independent learning provider, awarding organisation or other sector body email news@feweek.co.uk



JOBS

WMC

new JOBS

NEW Principal NEW VISION

The Camden College

Helen Hammond, New Principal of WMC The Camden College.
Building on our established reputation of OUTSTANDING

New vision, new plans…new opportunities.

WMC – the Camden College has 160 years' experience in providing life changing education to Adults. Recognised by Ofsted as an "Outstanding" provider in every aspect we have "Outstanding" financial health too. Now under our new Principal, Helen Hammond, we have bold and exciting plans for continuing, developing and expanding our work for many more years to come and we need YOU to help us develop and build our future.

Outstanding education requires outstanding business services and leadership too and so we have expanded our executive management team to ensure that our business strategies and processes are robust and keep pace with our needs and aspirations. As a result we are now looking to recruit able and ambitious individuals for the following new posts.

Assistant Principal - Operations

Salary up to £60k

Passionate about customer service, you will ensure that students' first experience at the College's two centres is welcoming, professional and efficient. With lead responsibility for Customer Services and enrolment functions, facilities management, IT infrastructure, HR and health and safety, you will be adept at juggling priorities and energised by being responsive, motivating teams and ensuring that learning environments are the best they can possibly be.

MIS Director

Salary up to £50k

In a time of funding cuts and close scrutiny of public expenditure, you will develop and use your thorough knowledge of SFA and EFA funding to support curriculum planning, ensuring that delivery patterns are optimised for learners whilst being compliant with funding rules. You will help us exploit the power of the newly installed student record system to design and interpret reports on performance and model future delivery.

Finance Director

Salary up to £50k

You will develop financial strategies and lead the finance and payroll department's operations to ensure that our £5.5million annual budget is deployed effectively to the benefit of learners and stakeholders. With a strong background in systems and procedures, you will lead the implementation of devolved budget holding and support greater financial empowerment of managers across the College.

Head of HR

0.5: Salary up to £50k pro rata

You will maintain our suite of HR policies to keep them in line with legislation and best practice and train and support our managers in their understanding and operation. But more than that you will be passionate about people and want to ensure that we are a caring employer, providing a positive and enjoyable working environment. You will promote a culture that gets the best out of staff and rewards them accordingly.

Curriculum Posts

Head of Department - Vocational and Employability Skills

Salary £41,916 - £45,792

You should have a successful track record of curriculum leadership and management and experience of working with employers and partnership building. We need someone who has the strategic vision and operational expertise to help ensure that this key area of work continues to grow and thrive. You will lead on developing the Vocational provision which includes Business, Administration, ICT, Early Years, Health, Social Care and Hair and Beauty.

Curriculum Manager - English and Maths

Salary: £32,142 - £36,162

We are looking for an outstanding Curriculum Manager to develop and grow our Maths and English provision from Entry level to GCSE. We need someone who is enthusiastic to achieve innovation, flexible delivery and outstanding learner outcomes.

Celebrating 160 Years

Closing date for Curriculum posts is 5pm on 23rd March
Closing date for all other posts is 3pm on 20th March

Interviews for all Management posts will be held in week beginning March 30th
Interviews for Curriculum posts will be held in week beginning April 20th.

For further details and to apply for one of the above posts please contact: jturner@wmcollege.ac.uk
Or please download further details and an application pack from our website: www.wmcollege.ac.uk
When you have completed your application you can email it to jturner@wmcollege.ac.uk or by post to Jo Turner, Working Men's College, 44 Crowndale Road, NW1 1TR

WMC The Camden College

The same... OUTSTANDING! College

Ofsted Outstanding College 2012|2013

WMC actively strives to be an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applicants from all sections of the community. All appointments will be solely on merit.
Registered Charity No. 312803.

www.wmcollege.ac.uk Tube: Mornington Crescent 2mins / Camden Town, Euston & St Pancras 10 mins

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Are you passionate about Education?
Do you inspire those around you?
Are you an innovative and ambitious leader?

Principal & CEO

Six-Figure Salary | Attractive Package | Relocation Package | Supported Progression into Chief Executive Role

MidKent College is at the heart of the Education sector in South East England; financially secure and with a turnover of c£50 million, the college continues to go from strength to strength. Not afraid to invest, the college boasts a sparkling £86 million Medway Campus in Gillingham, a recently redeveloped state-of-the-art campus in Maidstone as well as MKC Training Services, the provider of training at the Royal School of Military Engineering at Chatham.

We are looking for an exceptional candidate to lead the college, ensuring the needs of our learners come first in everything we do. You will steer the college through an ever changing FE landscape on our journey to Outstanding, maximising the impact MidKent College can make in the local community.

You will be the focal point of the college, leading by example in everything you do. We are looking for our next Principal to have ambition, passion, drive and vision, inspiring our next generation into Higher Education, Employment or Training. With an exceptional track record of leadership and management behind you, this will be the natural next step in your career.

Visit our microsite for more information and to apply for this life-changing career opportunity www.midkentprincipal.morganhuntmicrosite.com alternatively, for a confidential discussion about your application, please contact Frazer Thouard at Morgan Hunt on 0207 419 8910.

Closing date: Friday 27th March 2015 ***Interview dates: Monday 20th and Tuesday 21st April 2015***

morgan hunt
EXCELLENCE • CONNECTED

MidKent College

Week

e only newspaper dedicated
er education and skills

place to advertise your vacancies

NEXT RECRUITMENT ADVERT WITH FE WEEK,
TACT HANNAH ON 020 81234 778

www.aspenpeople.co.uk/dna

D&A
DUNDEE AND ANGUS COLLEGE

Principal and Chief Executive

Salary: c.£130,000

The Board of Dundee and Angus College is looking for a Principal and Chief Executive as a result of the forthcoming retirement of the current Principal.

Reporting to the Chair of the Dundee and Angus College Board, the Principal is the most senior member of the College's Executive Management Team, with the other members (Depute Principal and Assistant Principals) reporting to this role. The key feature of this role will be to lead a vibrant, dynamic and confident College that inspires success in its students and staff, delivers outstanding performance, and is highly regarded and sought after by partners, employers and the wider community.

The successful candidate will have a significant and successful track record of strategic leadership and management at senior level in a complex environment. They will be a respected and inspirational leader and have extensive experience of building valuable and influential relationships with individuals and organisations at a local and national level. Knowledge of the complex educational and political environment within which the College operates is essential. An innovative thinker with a real sense of purpose and courage is required to represent and lead the College with passion and credibility.

More information about the role, and a guide on how to apply, can be found at **www.aspenpeople.co.uk/dna**
For a confidential discussion please call Donogh O'Brien or Kelsey Sinclair at our executive search partners, Aspen People, on **0141 212 7555**.

Aspen

Closing date: Friday 27th March 2015.

GREAT PEOPLE · GREAT PARTNERS

JOBS

An exceptional opportunity for an exceptional candidate



Deputy Principal Finance, Planning and Corporate Services

City and Islington College, London | Competitive salary

City and Islington College has:

- A hard earned national reputation for delivering high quality outcomes for learners
- Outstanding Financial Health
- An ambitious strategic plan 2014-17

Are you excited by the opportunity of helping us to shape the next phase of our success story? If so, please view our microsite www.aocrecruit.co.uk/candi or contact Bernie Cullen at AoC Create on 020 7034 2631 or bernie_cullen@aoc-create.co.uk

Closing date for applications: Thursday 9 April 2015 (midday)
Final selection will take place in the college during w/c 27 April 2015

aocrecruit.co.uk/candi

Ofsted Outstanding 2007|2008

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE | Silver

AoC Create

CITY AND ISLINGTON COLLEGE

BE A KEY PLAYER IN OUR JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE

Professional Development and Quality Improvement Manager

Salary: £25,000-28,000.00 per annum

AOSEC

The Association of South East Colleges (AOSEC) is the regional organisation representing Further Education Colleges in the South East and is affiliated to the Association of Colleges.

AOSEC is a registered charity and works with, supports and represents over 60 colleges and partner organisations to provide world-class education and skills in the post compulsory education and training sector across the South East region.

A vacancy has arisen to join our dynamic and innovative organisation. We are looking for a Professional Development and Quality Improvement Manager to play a key role in delivering the events strategy and be responsible for the preparation, delivery and evaluation of AOSEC's professional development and quality improvement services and events.

This post would be ideally suited to someone wishing to use the skills they have gained working in the sector to help support colleagues from the sector.

This challenging and fast paced job presents an ideal opportunity to use your experience and develop your expertise by managing and organising a diverse portfolio of professional development events and projects. You will also develop, manage and maintain effective relationships with key partners to influence implementation of Government policy, ensuring that further education institutions can continue to thrive.

A job description and application form is available to download from **www.aosec.org.uk**

Applicants are also welcome to speak with Pamela Lumsden, CEO, to discuss the position further.
Please call 01483 235289 to arrange an informal discussion.

Applications must be returned by 5pm Friday 13th March 2015

The National Skills Academy
HEALTH

Join us in supporting the future healthcare workforce

The National Skills Academy for Health works with employers and training providers to ensure the healthcare support workforce gets the training they need to do the job they love, creating and maintaining the high quality health service we all want. Our vision, and that of the employers we work with, is to create a qualified and transferable workforce, with every individual recognised and valued for the skills they have, and encouraged and enabled to develop the skills they want and need.

Contracts and Programmes Manager

London or Home Based with frequent travel to London | Circa £40k

As part of the National Skills Academy for Health (NSA Health) and reporting to the NSA Health Head of Operations, the Contracts and Programmes Manager will be responsible for management of the organisations contracts with Skills Funding Agency, Health Education England and Department of Health. This will include the Adult Skills Budget which is held by Skills for Health but managed operationally through the NSA Health.

The post holder will work closely with the Head of Operations to deliver timely and accurate data, reports and funding claims which are able to be authenticated by robust external and internal scrutiny. The post holder will develop new and existing effective working relationships with organisations and agencies who place contracts and commissions with us.

Head of Skills and Development

Home based with extensive travel | Circa £45k

The post holder will make a significant contribution to the success of the National Skills Academy for Health (NSAH). Reporting to the Director, the Head of Skills and Development will be a key member of the senior management team of the NSA Health, ensuring good governance and contributing to the development and delivery of strategic, operational and financial plans.

The post holder will lead the work undertaken by the NSA Health and Skills for Health Academy to develop new learning programmes, resources and other interventions intended to improve skills development among the health care support workforce.

Data Analysis and Reporting Officer

London with some national travel | Up to £25k

As part of the National Skills Academy for Health (NSA Health) and reporting to the NSA Contracts and Programmes Manager, the Data Analysis and Reporting Officer and will be expected to act with a level of autonomy, using skills, experience and initiative. They will be responsible for delivery of timely and accurate data, reports and funding claims in relation to a range of contracts and programmes, including Skills Funding Agency Adult Skills Budget provision.

The post holder will work under the direction of the Contracts and Programmes Manager to ensure that all data returns are compiled, verified through associated tools (e.g. DSATs) and validated. They will work within defined parameters to ensure that amendments to data or funding claims are done in a structured, measured and auditable manner, compliant with applicable funding rules and regulations.

For full information on these roles, please visit: **www.nsahealth.org.uk/vacancies**

Closing Date: 23rd March 2015

The National Skills Academy for Health work with employers to facilitate a wide range of accredited and none accredited programmes nationally to meet sector and employer needs These programmes include,

- Pre-employment training to support entry level recruitment into the sector
- Apprenticeship programmes in Business and Administration, Health and Social Care, Clinical Health Skills and other health related areas
- Leadership and Management, Coaching, Mentoring, Learning and Development and other programmes relating to professional skills and behaviour

We are keen to hear from qualified assessors with experience in delivering across one or more of the above listed areas, particularly Apprenticeship delivery in Health and Social Care, Clinical Health Care Support, Business Administration and Optical Retail.

To apply, please send your CV to recruitment@nsahealth.org.uk

Barnet Southgate College

One college many successes



Barnet and Southgate College is a highly successful Further Education college with 4 campuses in North London and around 21,000 students of all ages. This is a great opportunity to join us in a leadership role.

Deputy Director

A-levels, Digital & Creative Technologies

Salary £65k per annum

We are looking for an exceptional individual to join our extended leadership group who can motivate and lead a curriculum team to ensure that every student is inspired to reach and exceed their potential.

We require an experienced leader who will build on the strengths of our existing curriculum provision and who shares our philosophy of making students the most highly-prized in the employment and academic marketplace.

This is one of two new roles within the management structure following a restructure in July 2014 and will be pivotal in leading the development of a destination-driven curriculum and contributing to the delivery of our aspirational strategic plan.

The successful candidate will have a proven track record of providing exceptional leadership with the ability to build on past successes and inspire, motivate and lead staff and learners to make our ambitious vision a reality.

You will be a strategic thinker with the ability to build relationships both internally with staff and students and externally with key industry partners to ensure our learners receive an excellent learning experience and develop the skills required, whilst at the College, to achieve their further education and career aspirations.

If you believe that you have the vision, skills, expertise and enthusiasm to make a difference and help us realise our ambition, we want to hear from you.

For further information about the post please go to:

www.barnetsouthgate.ac.uk/the-college/job-vacancies

Alternatively, please call 020 8275 3992 or email jobs@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk

Closing date: 2pm on 13th March 2015
Interviews: 26th March 2015

All appointments are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure & Barring Service.

THE ISLE OF WIGHT college

These are exciting times for the Isle of Wight College as we continue to build on our outstanding reputation and work towards our strategic aim to be the lead post-16 education provider on the Isle of Wight. The recent, successful acquisition of government funding has enabled us to develop a new STEM building on campus, due to be completed by the start of the academic year 2015/16. This will allow us to offer state of the art facilities and resources to our students, giving them the best possible learning opportunities.

Lecturers in Maths – VC 608

39 hours per week

Up to £35,000 per annum plus Market Supplement & Relocation Allowance

We are looking to recruit for a number of lecturers within our Maths provision. If you possess the commitment and passion to motivate and enthuse your students to develop the skills and attributes that will lead them to an exceptional future, then we want to hear from you.

With a recognised teaching qualification you will be an enthusiastic, innovative and dedicated lecturer with a demonstrable track record of helping students achieve excellence.

We are exceptionally proud of our island; it really is a beautiful, tranquil and unique place to live and work. From the bustling seaport villages of Cowes and Yarmouth to the popular holiday destinations of Sandown, Shanklin, and Ventnor, the Isle of Wight has a location to suit everyone. Shop til you drop in the upcoming county town of Newport, home to the College, or enjoy stunning views across the Solent and Channel on a coastal walk. Soak up the history, explore and unwind; you will be sure to receive a very warm welcome! The island also offers excellent and reliable links to the mainland.

Graduate Trainee Lecturer of Maths – VC 610

39 hours per week

£24,067 – £28,720 per annum plus Market Supplement & Relocation Allowance

We are looking to recruit an inspirational graduate as a trainee lecturer to deliver maths, across the age and ability range GCSE/Functional Skills students. If you possess the commitment and passion to motivate and enthuse your students to develop the skills and attributes that will lead them to an exceptional future, then we want to hear from you.

Successful candidates will have a degree in maths or a closely related subject e.g. engineering and will possess the enthusiasm, innovation and dedication to help students achieve excellence.

You will be passionate about maths, with a desire to develop this across the college. In return the Isle of Wight College will support the candidate's professional competence and development including teacher training.

The Isle of Wight College is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all members of the Community. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful applicants will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Closing Date: 12th March 2015

For further information please refer to our website: **www.iwcollege.ac.uk**,
or for an application pack email: **recruitment@iwcollege.ac.uk**

the skills network

RECRUITING FUNCTIONAL SKILLS
TUTORS IN MATHS AND ENGLISH

The Skills Network, a leading training provider, is currently recruiting full and part-time flexible Functional Skills tutors, to support learners while they work to complete our blended learning Functional Skills/GCSE qualification in English and Maths.

ABOUT THE ROLE

As a Functional Skills tutor you will be responsible for providing face to face support to learners in half-day sessions at a local venue. And or you will provide remote/online subject specific support to learners, as well as providing encouragement and feedback with the assistance of Learner Support and Retention Advisors. You will be required to liaise with the Learner Support Advisors in our office, regarding support for learners and any areas of concern. Once appointed you will need to attend an induction/training day at a Mercia venue.

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO YOU NEED?

All applicants are expected to hold a relevant qualification in the following areas:

- A teaching qualification PTTLS/CTTLS/DTTLS/Cert Ed/ PGCE or equivalent (or working towards)
- Level 3 in Maths and/or English
- Experience in supporting the delivery of functional skills in FE.

To apply for a role, please visit **www.theskillsnetwork.com** to download an application form and send your completed form to **careers@theskillsnetwork.com**

Teachers of English

Salary: £24,142 – £34,194 p.a. (or £36,840 - £39,466 if eligible for the PSP scale) inclusive of London weighting

Start date: August 2015

LSC
leyton sixth form college
SUCCESS
AT A CARING COLLEGE

Leyton Sixth Form College offers a wide range of A level and vocational courses to approximately 2,000 full-time 16-19 year old students. We strive to provide high quality education and support to our students in fulfilling their academic potential and becoming thinking, questioning and caring members of society. We are a diverse and vibrant college and are both proud of and celebrate the year on year success and achievements of our students and staff.

We are presently seeking two excellent teachers for A Level and GCSE English, to make a significant contribution to our successful English and Modern Foreign Languages programme area.

In order to be considered for this role, you will be qualified to teach within a sixth form college and be able to demonstrate exceptional classroom management and organisational skills, as well as have a successful track record of raising the standard of attainment and aspirations of students.

In return, we offer excellent benefits and development opportunities, as well as the opportunity to work within a thriving and committed environment.

For further information and to apply, please go to www.leyton.ac.uk

Please note that CVs will not be accepted for this role.

For any queries about the role, please email jobs@leyton.ac.uk or call us on 020 8928 9000.

Closing date for applications: 10.00 a.m. on Friday 13th March 2015

Leyton Sixth Form College has a strong commitment to safeguarding students and safe recruitment. All posts are subject to enhanced DBS clearance.

WALTHAM FOREST POST 16 PARTNERSHIP

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE | Champion

Varndean
CollegeBrighton&Hove

Varndean College is one of the most successful sixth form colleges nationally and has an excellent reputation for adding value.

The College offers a broad range of academic and vocational programmes from level 1 through to A level and the International Baccalaureate.

Teacher of Maths (GCSE, A LEVEL and/or IB)

£21,684 – £31,736 pa, or PSP range £34,382 – £35,628, as appropriate

Applications from enthusiastic, inspiring and suitably qualified applicants are invited, commencing September 2015.

There may be opportunity for a programme leadership responsibility allowance for the appropriate candidate.

Subject to enrolments, the College may be making further appointments to part-time teaching roles for September 2015 across a range of subjects up to level 3. CVs may be sent in at this time for consideration.

Visit www.varndean.ac.uk for further information or email hr@varndean.ac.uk

Closing date: 13th March 2015.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promotes the protection and welfare of all students. Appointments to the College are subject to enhanced DBS checks.

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

ENGLISH AND MATHS JOBS

FE WEEK

WE ARE CONTINUING TO OFFER FREE RECRUITMENT ADVERTISING FOR ALL ENGLISH AND MATHS TEACHING ROLES. GET IN TOUCH WITH HANNAH BELOW FOR MORE INFO

TO ADVERTISE WITH US CALL HANNAH SMITH ON
020 81234 778 OR
HANNAH.SMITH@FEWEEK.CO.UK

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great futures start here.



We're dedicated to helping apprentices achieve their potential. That's why we've developed a range of high quality full and part Apprenticeships at both advanced and intermediate level.

NCFE Apprenticeships are available across a range of sectors:

- Business, Administration and Law
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- Leisure, Travel and Tourism
- Information and Communication Technology
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- Health, Public Services and Care
- Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies.

We also offer a host of FREE learning resources to help enhance your Apprenticeship delivery and get the best results for your learners.

Start creating great futures today.

Call 0191 239 8000 **Email** service@ncfe.org.uk **Visit** ncfe.org.uk/apprenticeships

FE Week Sudoku challenge

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

		8	4		5	2		
	7		8		6		9	
2								6
3								9
	4		3		1		8	
1								2
8								7
	2		6		9		1	
		3	1		7	6		

Difficulty:
EASY

1			8	4				
	2			1			9	
		8						
4			3		6	5		
7	8						6	3
		5	2		7			4
						7		
	7			2			8	
				3	4			6

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

Last Week's solutions

6	7	5	1	4	8	9	2	3
2	4	8	5	9	3	1	6	7
1	9	3	2	7	6	5	8	4
8	5	2	3	6	1	4	7	9
4	1	9	7	8	2	6	3	5
3	6	7	4	5	9	2	1	8
7	2	1	9	3	4	8	5	6
9	3	6	8	1	5	7	4	2
5	8	4	6	2	7	3	9	1

Difficulty:
EASY

3	2	5	7	9	1	8	4	6
9	6	4	2	3	8	7	1	5
7	1	8	5	6	4	2	3	9
4	7	6	8	5	3	9	2	1
8	9	1	6	7	2	3	5	4
5	3	2	4	1	9	6	8	7
1	8	3	9	4	6	5	7	2
2	5	9	1	8	7	4	6	3
6	4	7	3	2	5	1	9	8

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference
to WIN an FE Week mug







Spot **five** differences. First correct entry wins an *FE Week* mug. Text your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to 07969 166 374.

The last edition's spot the difference winner was Protocol recruitment administrator Lucy Charlesworth, from Nottingham (pictured right).

